

## Message Text

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ACTION LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7567

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 07503

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB: BE

SUBJECT: WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR COAL MINERS

REF: STATE 181302

FOLLOWING REPLIES IN SERIATIM TO QUERIES POSED IN REFTEL:

A & B) BELGIUM NOW HAS A TOTAL OF 30,000 ACTIVE COAL MINERS-  
DOWN FROM A POST WW II PEAK OF 300,000. AT THE END OF 1974  
SOME 51,059 MINERS AND 7,048 DEPENDENTS WERE RECEIVING  
COMPENSATION FROM AN OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES FUND WHICH, SINCE  
1963, HAS COVERED ALL INDUSTRIAL SECTORS. STATISTICAL INFORMATION  
IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE FOR THE EARLIEST PERIOD OF THE OCCUPATIONAL  
DISEASES PROGRAM FOR MONERS WHICH BEGAN IN 1927.

C) ON AVERAGE, A CLAIM REQUIRES ABOUT 8 MONTHS TO PROCESS.

D) MINERS ARE COMPENSATED ON A SCALE COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR  
DEGREE OF DISABILITY, AS DETERMINED BY RADIOLOGICAL  
AND FUNCTIONAL CRITERIA. A GOOD DEAL OF DISCRETION RESTS WITH  
THE EXAMINING PHYSICIAN. IN PRACTICE, VICTIMS OF PNEUMOCONIOSIS  
ARE GENERALLY REGARDED AS TOTALLY DISABLED, AND ARE COMPENSATED  
AT 100 PCT OF THE NORMAL WAGE.

E) EVOLUTION OF COSTS FOR THE CURRENT OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES  
PROGRAM (ALMOST ENTIRELY FOR MINERS) WAS AS FOLLOWS:

1966 TOTAL COST 672.3 MILLION BF, OF WHICH 563.8 MILLION TO  
COMPENSATION; 1972 TOTAL COST 6,005.4 MILLION BF, OF WHICH

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5,505.4 MILLION BF, TO COMPENSATION; 1973 TOTAL COST 6,266.4

MILLION BF, OF WHICH 5,624.1 MILLION COMPENSATION; 1974 TOTAL COST 7,563.3 MILLION BF, OF WHICH 6,879.8 MILLION COMPENSATION. F & G) OF ROUGHLY 10,000 CLAIMS FILED IN 1974, SOME 6,000 WERE DETERMINED IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICANT. HISTORICAL INFORMATION ON THIS POINT IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE, BUT THE CURRENT RATION OF AWARDS TO CLAIMS IS BELIEVED TO BE STILL AT ABOUT 6 TO 10.

H) NO PAT FORMULA HAS BEEN DEVISED TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM, BUT AUTHORITIES ARE SATISFIED WITH WHAT THEY REGARD AS RELATIVELY LOW ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND, JUDGING FROM THE ABSENCE OF TRADE UNION DEMANDS IN THIS AREA, ONE MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE MINERS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE EXTENT AND LEVEL OF COVERAGE.

STATISTICAL, MEDICAL AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION BEING FORWARDED VIA AIR POUCH TO EUR LABOR ADVISOR.RENNER

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## Message Attributes

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